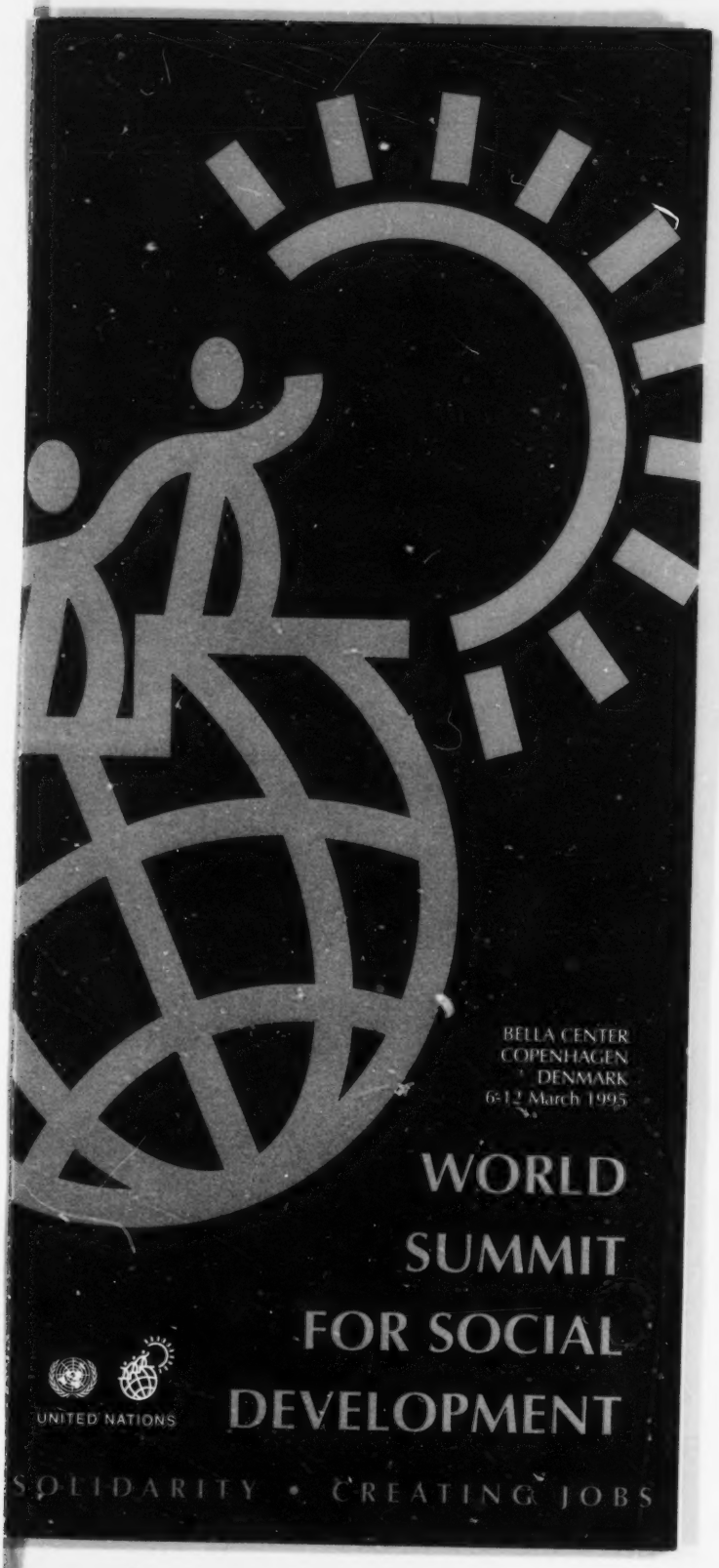
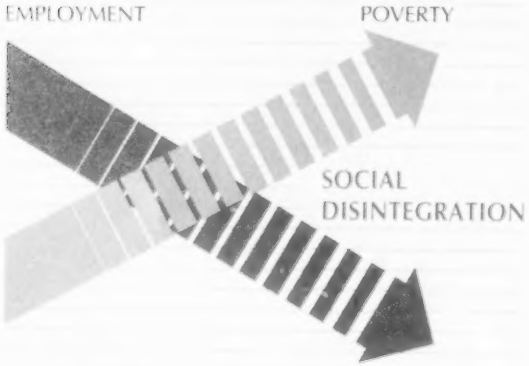

BELLA CENTER
COPENHAGEN
DENMARK
6-12 March 1995
WORLD
SUMMIT
FOR SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT
UNITED NATIONS
SOLIDARITY • CREATING JOBS

WHY A SOCIAL SUMMIT?

Promising unprecedented social and economic progress, the end of the cold war has, in fact, given way to a "cold peace", reflected in widespread political fragmentation and social destabilization. Instead of the long-awaited social harmony and affluence, there is increasing poverty and unemployment and a growing sense of insecurity.



What has happened? In the words of United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "the world is suffering from a social and moral crisis which, in many societies, is of immense proportions". The facts speak for themselves:

Poverty is widespread

- Worldwide, one out of every five people –more than one billion in all–lives below the poverty line, and an estimated 13 million to 18 million die annually of poverty-related causes;
- The ranks of those suffering extreme poverty will quadruple within one lifetime if current economic and demographic trends continue;
- Entire nations are afflicted: developing country debt is staggering. At $1.4 trillion, it is nearly double that of a decade ago. Servicing this debt means a net cash outflow from South to North and slashed social budgets which mean that the poorest in society bear the brunt of the burden.

Productive employment is decreasing

- One out of every 10 people of working age cannot find work paying a decent wage;
- Twenty per cent of the world's total wage earners receive only 2 per cent of the world's income;
- Worldwide, about 40 per cent of rural women work without wages on their families' farms. Even when paid, rural women earn far less than men for the same work.

Societies are disintegrating

Conflict:

- Conflict, a symptom of disintegration, has claimed more than 20 million lives since 1945. Over the last decade, conflicts within countries have increased: of the 82 armed conflicts between 1989 and 1992, 79 were domestic, many along ethnic lines; 90 per cent of casualties were civilian.

Migration:

- Conflict also produces refugees and forced migration. In the last decade, a total of 6.8 million–equal to the entire population of Switzerland–fled three countries: Afghanistan, the former Yugoslavia and Mozambique.
- Migration itself has become a business. The International Organization for Migration reports that smuggling of migrants is often as lucrative as trafficking in drugs.

Crime:

- Reported crime has grown at a world-wide average of 5 per cent each year since the 1980s; in the USA alone, there are 35 million crimes committed annually.
- Escalation of crime has been particularly swift in developing countries and countries in

transition; for example, the Russian Interior Ministry reported in 1994 that the country was beset by more than 5,600 gangs, almost 10 times more than in 1990;

• Illegal drug trafficking rakes in profits of some $500 billion a year–a sum equal to the combined gross national products of two thirds of the UN Member States put together.

• Criminal justice systems struggle to cope with increasingly complex and sophisticated types of crime, such as stock price manipulation, insider trading and credit card frauds.

Domestic violence:

• Violence in the home is both a symptom and a result of the breakdown of family values. Children are tragic victims. So are women, who are at more risk of being killed by their male partners than by any other kind of assault.

Corruption:

• Public corruption is becoming commonplace. In some countries financial frauds are estimated to cost the equivalent of 10 per cent of the country's annual gross domestic product.

These are symptoms of a sick world. There is a need for a new ideal of social progress based on responsibility, freedom and solidarity. Without "intensive care" in the form of a compelling new vision of human-centred economic growth, environmental protection, societal justice and democracy, peace may remain forever beyond our reach.

"For fifty years, nations avoided another world war, nuclear or conventional. But without investment in social development, the foundations of peace will not be secured", the Secretary-General told the Summit Preparatory Committee in August 1994.

CHANGING COURSE

"It is unacceptable that individuals and societies with the fewest resources–the poor, the unemployed, the weak and the vulnerable"–should have to bear "the greatest burden of the economic and social transformation of our world."

–Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali

Changing course is not so simple...

The problems are planetary. They must be addressed in a global context. This international approach requires foresight, collaboration and consensus in order to formulate a truly global strategy to combat the intertwined crises of poverty, unemployment and social disintegration in a way that will put people, not policies, at the centre of social development.

...but it can–and must–be done

"The globalization of economies and culture", characterized by increasing interdependence in everything from markets to population movements to decision-making modalities, "should benefit all people", said the Secretary-General's overview report on the Social Summit. It is the ultimate responsibility of Governments to ensure that the major problems of this decade–poverty, unemployment and social disintegration–are addressed through principles based on social justice and democracy and through actions built on respect for human dignity, individual freedom and equality of rights and responsibilities.

The chief objective of the Summit, the Secretary-General believes, should be a strategy that would lay the basis for cooperative action for social progress, development and peace–all of it based "on the crucial recognition that the nations of the world have a common interest in helping each other achieve these goals".

Assisting the least developed

A serious international commitment to social progress must include new efforts to restart development in the least developed countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa.

"The importance for Africa of this World Summit for Social Development cannot be overstated", the Secretary-General told delegations to the second session of the Preparatory Committee. "That continent has a unique opportunity to take stock of prevailing social conditions: to commit itself, with the support of the international community, to an action-oriented agenda for human and sustainable development".

"Structural adjustment programmes must be designed to be socially and environmentally sound", he said. "Economic reforms must be tailored to local conditions. They should be complemented by equally powerful initiatives to ensure that adjustment is not carried out at the expense of the poor."

The UN's role: "...in the forefront of social progress"

The United Nations responded to socially deteriorating conditions worldwide by calling for a World Summit for Social Development to address three issues: poverty, unemployment and social disintegration. This key event is one of a sequence of eight UN-sponsored conferences, part of a decade devoted to development. Thus, just as the UN played a vital role in raising awareness on sustainable development through the "Earth Summit" (UN Conference on Environment and Development), it is now the global proponent for social progress.

Putting people first

Seen in this context, the World Summit for Social Development is the centrepiece of the UN's commitment to put social issues at the centre of development.

THE ROAD TO COPENHAGEN

"Successful societies are those which focus on people..."

–Report of the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the Social Summit

1992: General Assembly resolution 47/92 calls for the convening of a World Summit for Social Development

1993: UN Conference for non-governmental organizations focuses on "Social Development: A New Definition for Security"

Forty-eighth session of the General Assembly discusses reports on Summit preparations from the Preparatory Committee, regional commissions and the July 1993 High-Level Segment of the Economic and Social Council

1994: **31 January - 11 February, New York**
First session of the Summit Preparatory Committee considers reports from the Secretary-General, expert group meetings and UN specialized agencies and programmes

22 August - 2 September, New York
Second session of the Summit Preparatory Committee discusses draft text of the Summit Declaration and Programme of Action

Negotiations on the texts continue during the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly

1995: **16-27 January, New York**
Third session of the Summit Preparatory Committee

6-12 March, Copenhagen, Denmark
WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
and NGO Forum '95

"The United Nations' role is to be in the forefront of social progress...The Social Summit will be both a test and an indication of the commitment of international society to help the most impoverished. This is a rendezvous that we must not miss."

–Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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